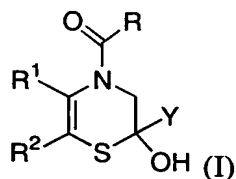


ABSTRACT

Provided are compounds of the formula (and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof):



wherein:

R is hydrogen, methyl, hydroxymethyl or α -hydroxyethyl;

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 alkyl, C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl, C_3 - C_8 cycloalkyl, C_1 - C_6 alkenyl, C_1 - C_6 alkynyl, amino, monoalkylamino, dialkylaminoalkyl, and pyrrolidin-1-ylalkyl; and Y is selected from the group consisting of C_1 - C_6 alkyl, substituted and unsubstituted aryl; with the provisos that: (a) if Y is aryl, then at least one of R^1 and R^2 is other than hydrogen, and (b) if R^2 is hydrogen R^1 is other than methyl.

Also provided are pharmaceutical compositions containing the compounds, and methods for the preparation of the compounds. The compounds are useful, among other things, as prodrugs which can be converted under acidic conditions to thiazolium agents. The compounds can be administered to mammals, including humans, for treatment of various indications.

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